



NEWS RELEASE

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Pair Sentenced to Prison for 1995 Killing in Long Beach

Two men were sentenced today to state prison after they were convicted of fatally shooting a pizza deliveryman in Long Beach nearly two decades ago, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Tomson T. Ong sentenced James Lemon to 25 years to life in state prison. Lemon's codefendant, Venda Johnson, was sentenced to life in state prison without the possibility of parole.

On Dec. 3, a jury found the two defendants guilty of first-degree murder in case NA096742. Additionally, jurors found true a special circumstance allegation of murder in the commission of an attempted robbery, as well as a special allegation that a principal in the crime was armed with a handgun during the killing.

Deputy District Attorney Patrick Frey, who prosecuted the case, said the killing occurred near an apartment building in Long Beach on Nov. 22, 1995.

The victim, Renato Teniente, was a pizza deliveryman who had just made a delivery at the apartment and was seated in his car when attacked by the defendants.

The prosecutor said Lemon and Johnson, who were both teenagers at the time, ran towards Teniente's car, and one of the defendants shot him during an attempted robbery.

The 60-year-old victim died in his car and the two defendants fled the scene, the prosecutor added.

The incident remained a cold case for 17 years before Long Beach police reopened the investigation. The next year, the defendants were charged in connection with the killing.

Police found Lemon living in Las Vegas and he was extradited to California. Meanwhile, Johnson was located in a Colorado prison, where he was serving a life sentence for a triple murder. He also was transferred to California for the new murder case.

The case was investigated by the Long Beach Police Department.

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About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to seeking justice for victims of crime and enhancing public safety. Last year, the [Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](#) prosecuted more than 71,000 felony defendants and nearly 112,000 misdemeanor defendants.